

ABSTRACT

INCREASING EFFICIENCY IN FOOTBALL BY USING INDIVIDUALIZED TRAINING FOR 13-14- YEAR-OLD FOOTBALL PLAYERS

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Ever since its appearance until now, football has experienced a complex period of transformation and evolution and is currently a social phenomenon present on a global scale. Currently, players' training is reported to the player's full profile, which adapts easily at any point in the game and in any game situation, but also at the specificity of the requirements of a particular team position. In this respect, many training methods and procedures have been developed which aim at developing multiple motor skills at once, embedded in an integrated training process.

The training factors intertwine and work together in order to solve precise objectives, the football training process now having a high degree of specificity and effectiveness, in line with the current game requirements. Such an approach to training has come about because football nowadays has a high degree of complexity, expressed by a great deal of variability in the game situations and conditions which a player has to deal with. As far as the development and improvement of the football player is concerned, it should be noted that this is guided by a certain psycho-somato-psychological profile which the current football demands.

Thus, the future performance footballer not only has to demonstrate very well-developed individual and combined motor skills, but he must also have somatic indexes that are appropriate to a particular job and which contribute to the enhancement of certain motor qualities on the playing field. In addition, the profile of the current footballer also requires a high degree of development of intellectual abilities, psychic qualities that are necessary, such as creativity, anticipation, concentration, spirit of combativity, etc.

In view of these requirements to be met when it comes to the formation of future football players, we have proposed to carry out the research entitled *"Increasing efficiency in football by using individualized training for 13-14-year-old football players"*, a research that has aimed to diversify the ways of carrying out the modalities of realization of the instructive-educational process and its necessity to develop in accordance with the specific requirements of the current football and according to the individual particularities of each individual player. the goal being to significantly improve individual and team sports performance

As far as the junior age is concerned, taking into account that at the age of 13-14, children are in a strong bio-psycho-motor development, it is necessary to insist in the training process on the formation of a broad thinking, a clear vision of the game, the psychic features necessary for practising football and, last but not least, the formation of personality. The age of junior and puberty manifests the prerequisites for educating the skills necessary for football, the child showing a predisposition for learning and acquiring knowledge, getting mature from a psychological point of view and being able to cope with higher requirements.

In nowadays' football, the training process at the children and junior levels does not take place in a way that allows the players to think, while giving them the freedom to act. Individualization, as a training principle, can contribute decisively to the formation of tactical thinking, to the ability to make the right decisions in space and time, while developing perception, creativity, and increasing the motivation to be better. We believe that the individualization of football training, in a diverse form and with multiple and varied tasks, can have a great impact on the training of the young footballer from a technical and tactical point of view.

Considering that in football there are situations of inferiority or of numerical equality more and more encountered in the game, on a limited space, and that the time needed to make a decision and the continuation of the game has diminished considerably, we consider it necessary in the junior training programme to emphasize on the promotion of respect for the principle of individualisation. The individualization, according to Nicu Al., 2002, is a "specific principle of sports training, which recommends that the values of the model's indicators be based on their application on the somatic, functional, physical, technical, tactical possibilities of each athlete and on the tasks during the game or according to the motor and energetic demands of the event, of the game in which he competes."

Our scientific approaches have as a starting point the premise according to which the introduction of individualized training in the junior training process contributes to the formation of complete players whose individual and collective performances are high.

In the first part, “**The scientific foundation of the research topic**” by studying the specialized literature, we considered it appropriate to analyze and interpret the theoretical foundations to support the scientific approach, but also to highlight the advantages of using in the training of the technical-tactical exercises with a small number of players with individual, precise and diverse tasks, or individually personalized, to form players that are best prepared for the current football requirements.

As a result of the documentation, the assimilation of a large amount of information regarding the physical, technical, tactical, psychological and theoretical characteristics of football, according to the goals and particularities of the 13-14-year-old football players, we found that there is no research that highlights the efficiency of the use of individualized training in the integrated training process at this level, which has led us to conceive and implement the strategy of developing the second part of the research, “**Preliminary research in the context of the topic**”.

The second part, materialized through the preliminary research, aimed at highlighting the opinion of the coaches and athletes regarding the approach of the training process and the knowledge of the level of the physical-technical-tactical training of the 13-14-year-old juniors in football.

The first study, which consisted in knowing the coaches’ opinion on how to approach the training process and obtaining information on the use of individualized training in junior training, was conducted on a sample of 25 coaches. The coaches, UEFA license holders, belonging to the children and junior centers and clubs affiliated to the Romanian Football Federation, answered a questionnaire, with 10 items, regarding their opinion on the particularities of the training process and the opportunity to use the training individualized at this age and highlighted the benefits of applying individualization in achieving superior sports performance. Thus, from the first study of this type of research carried out by filling out a questionnaire by the coaches of the groups of children and juniors, the collection, analysis and interpretation of the results highlight the fact that the problem of using individualization in the training process, depending on their peculiarities is topical and necessary in the cognitive multilateral development of 13-14-year-old juniors, which also has direct implications on the main factors of sports training and players’ performances, which validates the *first hypothesis* according to which *coaches have different views on the training process and the implementation of individualisation in the training process is necessary for improving performances*.

In the *second study*, which aimed at knowing the athletes’ perception of the training process and their degree of involvement, as well as the knowledge of the level of physical-technical-tactical training of the juniors, included a sample of 60 juniors aged 13-14 years belonging to the groups of children and juniors of CSM Ceahlăul Piatra-Neamț, LPS I Piatra-Neamț and

LPS II Piatra Neamț. In order to accomplish this study, we used: measurements for somatic development assessment, opinion questionnaire, tests and events for assessing physical training and the observation sheet regarding the individual technical-tactical level of the juniors. The interpretation of the questionnaire filled out by the subjects demonstrates that *players are aware of the importance of the training process and feel the need to improve aspects of their individual game*, which validates *the second hypothesis* and the interpretation of the results obtained from the observation sheets of the competitive performance as well as the support of some aptitudinal-motor events demonstrates that *the level of physical-technical-tactical training of the 13-14-year-old football juniors differs from one team to another and requires a training process approached through individualization*, which validates *the third hypothesis*.

The results of the preliminary research allowed us to draw some important conclusions regarding the use of the individualized training in the training of the 13-14-year-old football juniors, conclusions that confirm the research hypotheses and give direction for the experimental research.

These aspects of the preliminary research lead us to believe that individualized training is up-to-date through the effects of the training process, but must be implemented taking into account the players' development specificities and the requirements of the football game.

In order to prove the above, we considered it necessary to plan and conduct an experimental research aimed at **“Increasing efficiency in football by using individualized training for 13-14- year-olds”**.

The **aim** of the research was to highlight the improvement in game efficiency and individual performance in 13-14-year-old football players after using an individualized training.

The experimental research, through which we try to make a personal contribution to the development of the domain, had the following **objectives**:

- Improving the effort capacity and motor skill indices of 13-14-year-old football players following the use of individualized training;

- Improving the ability to act in the game by using individualized technical-tactical exercises on 13-14-year-old football players twice a week for 9 months;

- Improving the decisional factor and the players' tactical thinking and tactical thinking in training and playing conditions, using individualization.

In order to carry out the experimental research, we verified the following hypotheses:

- promoting individualization for 9 months in training contributes to improving the effort capacity and motor skills indices of 13-14-year-old football players (physical factor);

- the use of 9-month technical and tactical exercises in adversity conditions and space and time crises in 13-14-year-olds twice a week

contributes to improving the ability to act during the game (technical-tactical factor);

- promoting individualization in training for 9 months facilitates the improvement of the decision maker and tactical thinking of players, compartments and dynamics of the game system (psychological factor);

- using individualized training for 13-14-year-old football players for 9 months increases efficiency in football.

In order to organize and conduct the experimental research, we considered it appropriate to establish the following tasks:

- establishing the research methods, the events and the evaluation tests and the subjects participating in the experiment;

- applying the events and tests to the subjects of the research;

- developing a training program containing the individualisation football exercises, having the role of improving tactical thinking and also the individual and collective performance of the 13-14-year-old football players;

- implementing the proposed applied intervention programme within the experimental group in order to achieve the purpose of the scientific approach;

- recording, processing, analysis and statistical interpretation of the results.

For the preliminary and experimental research we used the following methods: bibliographic study, pedagogical observation, evaluation method, statistical-mathematical method, and graphical method. In experimental research we also used the experiment method.

The samples, part of the research, comprised 40 players aged 13-14, belonging to teams registered in the County Football Championship organized by the Neamt County Football Association. The team representing the experiment group consisted of a total of 20 players certified by CSM Ceahlăul Piatra-Neamț, while the team representing the control group consisted of a total of 20 players belonging to the Piatra- German. The research took place at the sporting base of CSM Ceahlăul Piatra-Neamț football club, held for a period of 9 months.

The initial and final tests corresponding to the experimental research we have carried out materialized in the form of tests and evaluation events, but also in the form of observation sheets, designed to outline and evaluate in a concrete and objective manner the physico-technical-tactical, but also psychological profile of the subjects of the research. Thus, the initial and final evaluations were composed of:

- a 7-measurement battery and an index for somatic development (height, weight, body mass index, bust height, biachromial diameter, bitherochrome diameter, thorax perimeter, and Erismann index);

- a functional assessment test (Ruffier test);

- 7 tests for motor skills' assessment (10-meter sprint running, 30-meter sprint running, arrowhead agility drill, sargent jump, thigh flexion, extension of the facial lumbar torso and 1000-meter endurance running);
- 4 assessment events for the individual technical level (driving the ball on a predetermined route, passing the ball with the width of the foot at different distances, keeping the ball in the air with the foot, and hitting the ball with the foot, laces kicking towards the goal on areas);
- an observation sheet for assessing the individual tactical level (demarcation, individual overtaking, upward movement, marking, ball probing and recovery);
- an observation sheet for the assessment of psychological aspects (determination, helpful spirit, lucidity, trust, self-control capacity, concentration, sense of anticipation and vision).

The applied intervention was achieved by using 40 football-specific action systems, which were used in two of the three training sessions in a week, over a period of 9 months. Each action system was adapted to best fit the peculiarities of the principle of individualisation, implemented by 2 action systems in each training for this scientific approach. The proposed action systems have been tailored to the level of readiness of the subjects and also to the objectives pursued and the desideratums claimed during this football period as well as to the characteristics of the current football game. They were designed to capture the players' attention, to intensify the tactical thinking, the perception and understanding of the game situations and at the same time to strengthen the game relationships between compartments and players.

The evaluation of the subjects, through which we aimed to cover a larger area of the training components, gave us a relevant, synthetic and objective picture of the actual training level of the 13-14-year-old football player.

The research hypothesis according to which *the promotion of the individualization for 9 months of training contributes to the improvement of the effort capacity and the motor skills of 13-14-year-old football players* has been validated, supported by the results obtained at the initial and final testing at the motor skill tests by the subjects of the experimental group compared to the subjects of the control group.

The research hypothesis according to which *the use of 9-month technical and tactical exercises in adversity conditions and space and time crises at 13-14-year-old football players twice a week contributes to the improvement of the action capacity during the game time* has been validated as well as **the hypothesis** according to which *the use of individualized training for 13-14-year-old football players for 9 months leads to an increased efficiency in the football game*, which is supported by the results obtained at the initial and final testing at the technical samples and at the individual tactical actions by the subjects of the experimental group compared to the subjects of the control group.

The research hypothesis according to which the promotion of individualization within the training sessions for 9 months facilitates the improvement of the decision-maker and tactical thinking of the players, on compartments and within the dynamics of the game system has been validated, supported by the results obtained in the initial and final testing of the psychological issues, by the subjects of the experimental group compared to the subjects of the control group.

The confirmation of the hypotheses formulated in the research leads us to the following general conclusion:

The use of a training programme based on the principle of individualisation, supported by the results of the experimental research and confirming the research hypotheses, contributes to the increase of the efficiency in the football game by improving the individual and collective performances and the multilateral development of the 13-14 year-old football player.

An element of personal contribution is the choice of the control samples adapted to the needs and exigencies of the nowadays' football game.

Another element of originality of our scientific approach is the elaboration of an operational training programme as well as appropriate training plans for the entire competitive season, as well as the planning of the action systems in relation to the individuality of training the principles of individualization in order to increase efficiency and improvement of the technical-tactical and psychological individual level.

Therefore, we consider that the elaboration of the training process based on the principle of individualization is of a genuine character and gives rise to a pronounced interest both from the coaches and the subjects of the research who have experienced this new way of preparation, the content and the diversity of the proposed action systems having a great positive impact on them.